



# Alert

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## March freezes spring out and winter hits hard

Winter storm Thor took an opportunity to remind us that spring didn't start until late March with another round of nasty weather in the first week. The NWS warned that precipitation would make fairly rapid transitions from freezing rain to sleet and then to snow as the cold front travelled across Arkansas from northwest to southeast on March 4. Predictions showed significant accumulation of sleet and snow with the possibility of some areas seeing more than four inches of snow.

Scott Bass, Disaster Management Division Director, said "The SEOC was activated due to the potential for severe winter weather. With the possibility of ice and snow accumulation throughout the entire state, ADEM in coordination with the Arkansas State Police (ASP) activated the Arkansas National Guard to support each of the ASP Troop Headquarters with transportation and potentially locate stranded motorists if necessary. The missions remained active until the threat

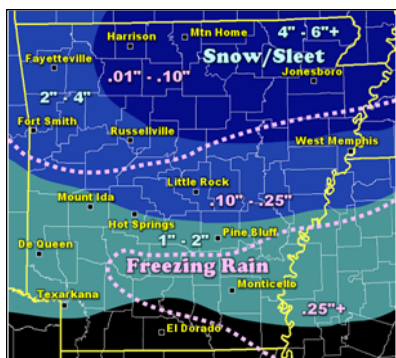
passed and roadways began to clear."

The State Police pre-positioned the Army National Guard assets long before the storm was forecasted to reach their areas. Electricity companies also pre-staged crews around the state for faster reactions to outages.

"Our main concern was the accumulation of ice and freezing rain onto trees and power lines which would have caused widespread power outages," explained Ken Gibson, Communications Division Director.

"Fortunately, most of the precipitation was in the form of small frozen ice pellets before changing over to snow. While this caused terrible road conditions, the frozen particles did not stick to power lines. The peak of power outages during the event was around 5,300 statewide, which is a relatively small number unless you're one of the ones without power."

**See Thor on page 2**



## In this issue



### ROC Drill

Rehearsal of Concepts Drill was held in Jacksonville.

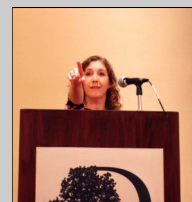
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### March Exercise

A lot of visitors stepped in and took part in the SEOC exercise.

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### Caption Contest

What are they saying?

**Page 5**

*“Our main concern was the accumulation of ice and freezing rain onto trees and power lines...” -*  
*Ken Gibson, Communications*  
*Division Director*

## Thor

Continued from page 1

Thursday afternoon the number of customers without power was reduced to less than 300. The Highway department had most of the roads cleared by Thursday evening and those that needed attention after the refreeze were seen to on Friday. This entire incident is proof positive that preparing for a disaster ahead of time mitigates the damage and disruption it causes.



Proof that our staff plans before engaging in the real effort, above right.



When the Inclement Weather policy is enacted there are still essential personnel who brave the icy roads to staff the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management. (From left) Amber Daugherty, James Tiner, Tina Owens, Katie Belknap and Jordan Abshire stayed onsite due to the road conditions and took time between shifts to play in the snow.



An Arkansas Army National Guard soldier assists State Trooper with a stranded motorist during the March winter weather event. Soldiers were positioned at Troop headquarters around the state in preparation for exactly this reason.



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## Calendar of Events

### April

#### HazMat Training

**6-7** — HazMat Awareness in Craighead County.  
**6, 7 & 8** — Rad/Nuc Awareness in Crittenden County.  
**11** — Meth Lab Awareness in White County.  
**11** — BioDiesel in White County.  
**11** — HazMat Awareness in Crawford County.  
**13-24** — HazMat Technician in White County.  
**13-16** — HazMat Operations in Craighead County.  
**18** — HazMat Awareness in Faulkner County.  
**20** — Meth Lab Awareness in Crawford County.  
**21** — Terrorism Awareness in Logan County.  
**21-22** — HazMat Awareness in Washington County.  
**27-29** — Basic Air Monitoring in Benton County.  
**30** — Advanced Air Monitoring in Benton County.

#### EM Training

**6-7** — ICS 200 in Washington County.  
**6-7** — ICS 300 in Faulkner County.  
**8-9** — ICS 400 in Faulkner County.  
**11-12** — ICS 400 in Chicot County.  
**20-21** — ICS 300 in Washington County.  
**22-23** — ICS 400 in Washington County.  
**23** — Building Screening for Earthquake Damage at ADEM.

#### Exercises

**1** — NW Arkansas Regional Pandemic Influenza Scenario. POC is [Steve Oler](#).  
**15** — ADEM State Emergency Operations Center Exercise.  
**29** — SW Regional TTX. POC is [Chris Rowland](#).



## FEMA Online Training with FEMA

**On April 1st, 2015** the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) will begin to use the FEMA SID number when submitting your Independent Study (IS) final exam. You may continue to use your SSN or Alternate ID number until today; however, **we recommend registering a FEMA SID as soon as possible:** <https://cdp.dhs.gov/femasid>.

**What is a FEMA SID?** FEMA Student Identification (SID) number is a unique number generated and assigned to anyone who needs or is required to take training provided by a FEMA organization. Your FEMA SID uniquely identifies you throughout the FEMA organization and all of its agencies. The goal is for your FEMA SID to serve as your personal identification number instead of your Social Security Number (SSN) in support of FEMA's effort to decrease/cease the use of SSN for identifying and tracking individuals.

### May

#### HazMat Training

**2-3** — HazMat Awareness Course in Fulton County.  
**4-5** — Terrorism Awareness Course in Craighead County.  
**9** — Terrorism Awareness Course in Sebastian County.  
**11-22** — HazMat Technician Course in Lawrence County.  
**18-19** — HazMat Awareness Course in Sevier County.  
**30-31** — HazMat Operations Course in Fulton County.

#### EM Training

**2-3** — ICS 300 in Johnson County.  
**4-7** — O-305 Type 3 IMT in Garland County.  
**18-20** — G-202 Debris Management in Benton County.  
**18-19** — ICS 300 in Craighead County.  
**20-21** — ICS 400 in Craighead County.

#### Exercises

**6** — Mayhem in May: Vilonia TTX with a Local Tornado Scenario.  
**20** — ADEM State Emergency Operations Center Exercise.



## Around Arkansas

### Mid-Year

Mid-Year Conference is a time where all of the Local Coordinators can get together and compare notes and stories.

It's also an opportunity to get updates on policies and procedures from ADEM Staff—and of course ask questions while they're stuck behind the podium.

This mid-year David Maxwell, ADEM Director, gave Local Coordinators a bit of advice on dealing with state legislators. "They will pay more attention to you, a constituent, than me an agency director. Tell them what is important to you." He inspired us too, so later in this newsletter you can find a summary of the bills we're watching.

Many other ADEM Staffers spoke about their particular areas of expertise and answered any questions.

### Bellott appointment

An Arkansas emergency manager has been named to the FEMA Regional Advisory Council.

Sheila Bellott, Faulkner County Emergency Management Coordinator, will serve on the panel, which covers five states – Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and New Mexico.

The council's purpose is to advise FEMA officials on emergency management issues and help identify strengths and weaknesses in preparedness, protection, response, recovery and mitigation, according to a letter from George Robinson, Regional Administrator.

Bellott will serve a three-year term. ADEM Director David Maxwell is also a member of the council.

The group meets at the FEMA Region 6 headquarters in Denton, Texas.



David Carter (right) and R. Brian Hawthorne (left) at the 2014 Arkansas APCO Conference in Eureka Springs. David Carter worked in the telecom world for over 40 years and retired March 31st.



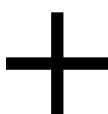
Ross Schultz and Latryce Robinson, Administrative Assistants in the Disaster Management Division, managed the check-in table. These two smiling faces set the mood for the entire Conference and the swag they gave out didn't hurt.

### Saying goodbye

For everyone in the PSAP world, David Carter has been a long-time friend. Those of us at ADEM who have had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Carter would like to send our sincerest wishes for a long and happy retirement. While his retirement is well-deserved, we will greatly miss him.

David Carter has worked in the telecom world for almost 41 years. He started in 9-1-1 in the fall of 1988 and helped implement many of our state's 9-1-1 systems. While we look forward to working with his replacement, David's experience and knowledge off all things 9-1-1 will be missed.

March 31 was David's last official work day. There will be a retirement party in honor of Mr. Carter at the AR APCO/NENA conference (19-21 April) in Eureka Springs.



*Follow ADEM on social media for real-time news and information!*

# Podium playtime at Mid-Year

Caption these photos!

Suggestions can be sent to [publicaffairs@adem.arkansas.gov](mailto:publicaffairs@adem.arkansas.gov).

Good ones will be reposted on FB and Twitter!





## EOC exercise “overwhelms” staff

ADEM's March exercise stressed the capacity of those working in the State Emergency Operations Center.

The event called for a number of tornadoes to strike in various locales around the state, ultimately affecting nearly a dozen counties. Power outages, localized flooding and some structural damage were the main results of the “storms”.

Staff were responsible for coordinating responses, including shelters at a half-dozen sites, utility reconnections and law enforcement.

Mark Hooker, Training and Exercise Branch Manager, explained that exercise priorities have changed over the years, with the focus now being on capabilities of the staff.

“We will start off sometimes with the intent of trying to overwhelm them,” he said. “If we can force them to break down, that is even better because that way we can see where our weaknesses are.”



Steve Moore, Training Instructor for ADEM, talks to Chris Rowland and Dean Hannah from the Department of Health. Dean is the new Exercise Coordinator for ADH and came to observe how our exercises run.



Tim Johnson, Team Chief, and Kerri Phillips, Team Chief Assistant, at the March SEOC Exercise Activation. Kerri, an experienced Team Chief Assistant, helped Tim during his first time acting as Team Chief.

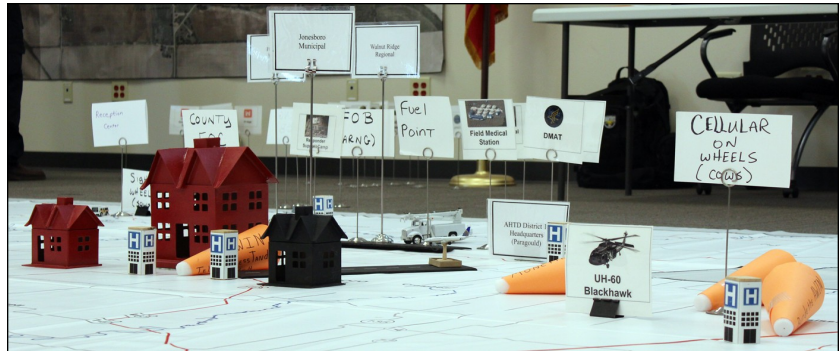
# Drill prompts all-hazards conversation

Emergency managers in the Central United States know that a potentially devastating earthquake is possible along the New Madrid Fault.

That threat is not lost on emergency managers and responders in Arkansas. It often becomes the mechanism for ongoing emergency planning.

Such was the case when local, state and federal officials gathered for a two-day rehearsal of concepts (ROC) drill in Jacksonville.

Using a huge map of the state and placards identifying various type of resources, the officials explained their expected response to a catastrophic earthquake in terms of immediately after the event and then for several days afterward. Participants



This area of this map is a depiction of Jonesboro and each card represents a resource that agencies plan to send in the event of a New Madrid Earthquake.

detailed plans for moving resources into the affected areas and focused much of their attention on how resources would flow into the region.

Tim Johnson, ADEM Operations Planner, said the drill's main purpose was to determine that identified state staging areas are adequate and that

the proper resources would be available at those staging areas.

One aspect of the potential response that became readily apparent was a possibility of overloading a given staging site. "When you had 10 different entities at that location, it makes you sit back and think, 'Is this place big enough to handle all this?' If it's not, what do we need to do to relook at those positions?"

Johnson said an important part of the discussion involved identifying fall-back staging areas in case a proposed site in Walnut Ridge isn't available. "Is it going to be available? If not, where do we need to look as a secondary site? Fort Chaffee and possibly Hope and a couple other areas in the state were identified," he noted.

Johnson is compiling comments for an after-action report, and he said that planning for an earthquake and other hazards on the state level will continue.



Scott Bass and Anthony Coy discuss logistics at the ROC Drill. It's all about location, location, location.



## Recent Experience Implementing ESF-12

By John P. Bethel

The Arkansas Public Service Commission is the coordinating state agency for Emergency Support Function 12 (ESF-12) under the state emergency plan. Under ESF-12, the Commission coordinates with the regulated utilities and several other agencies. The Commission coordinates with the jurisdictional utilities to ensure that state emergency officials are informed on the status of the restoration of damaged utility facilities. The restoration of utility facilities is the responsibility of the utilities that own and operate the facilities.

The Commission is the primary liaison between the utilities and state and local emergency management personnel. The Commission assists state and local authorities on the status of restoration of service; restoration priorities; and opportunities for state and local entities to assist the utilities in restoring service. The Commission provides personnel at the state emergency operations center (EOC) when it is activated. The Commission provides timely and accurate information on the status of the restoration of service. The Agency provides a single point of contact between government entities and the utilities. The Agency follows the established procedures in providing information.

To ensure preparedness for implementing ESF-12, the Commission participates in regular exercises with the utilities and state and local emergency management personnel. The ESF-12 agencies and the utilities have gained experience during the 2009, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 ice storms and winter weather. The

participants have also gained experience during the tornado events that occur annually.

During the winter weather events of February and March of 2015, the Commission again followed the procedures of ESF-12. With each event, Commission personnel worked with the jurisdictional utilities to monitor the status of the utility facilities during and after each winter weather event. The Commission personnel provided regular updates to state and local emergency personnel on the location of utility service outages and the progress of each utility toward restoring service to the affected customers. Under the established procedures, Commission personnel provided updates at the beginning of each day; at the middle of each day; and at the end of each day. These updates enable state and local officials to remain aware of the status of utility service and to plan the delivery of equipment, supplies, and personnel to the affected areas as needed.

Following each time Commission personnel act under ESF-12, those individuals review their actions and determine whether there are opportunities to make improvements or modifications to those procedures. Each event provides an opportunity to evaluate performance and improve the implementation of ESF-12. Effective communication and cooperation among the utilities; state and local emergency personnel; and the participating agencies is critical to responding to events. ESF-12 continues to provide an effective framework to address outages and restoration of utility service.

John P. Bethel is the Executive Director of the Arkansas Public Service Commission.





# Emergency Management Legislation

Here is a quick run-down of some of the bills we have been tracking that might be of interest to you.

**[HB1619](#) —Permitting the Operation of a 911 Emergency Response System by a Private Entity :** Allows a private entity to run 911 with County Sheriff's agreement.

**[HB1653](#) —To Create the 2015 School Safety Act :** Requiring schools to have a panic button alert system if funds are available.

**[HB1659](#) —To Amend the Law Concerning the Rural Fire Departments Study Committee :**  
An amendment to adjust the purpose and membership of the committee.

**[HB1737](#) —Providing that Administrative Rules Promulgated by a State Agency shall not become Effective until Reviewed and Approved by a Legislative Committee :** Establishes a committee to review and approve rules created by state agencies.

**[HB1770](#) —Concerning the Regulation of Aeronautics; To Restrict the Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems Under Certain Circumstances; and to Provide for Criminal Penalties and Civil Liability :** To regulate drone usage—to include requiring written permission for use, to protect critical infrastructure and to establish penalties for those in violation of this act.

**[HB1937](#) —To Amend the Arkansas Emergency Services Act of 1973; To Advance Public Safety; To Enhance and Strengthen Interoperability across Arkansas; and to Establish the Arkansas Interoperable Communications Executive Council :** Establishes the Arkansas Interoperable Communications Executive Council and establishes a trust fund for their use.

**[SB1044](#) —To Establish the Arkansas Wireless Information Network Fund :** Creates a fund to use for maintenance, repair, upkeep, replacement, contracting expenses, tower repair and replacement for the Arkansas Wireless Information Network.

**[SB382](#) —To Study the Restructuring of Various State Agencies into Principal Departments and the**

**Efficiency and Cost Savings of Consolidation of those Agencies; and to Declare an Emergency :** Restructuring, if adopted, would place 127 state agencies under 10 or more State Departments.

**[SB386](#) —An Act for the Department of Rural Services General Improvement Appropriation :** Appropriates funds for grants to fire departments and other rural agencies.

**[SB651](#) —An Act for the Department of Rural Services General Improvement Appropriation :** Appropriates funds for grants to fire departments.

**[SB741](#) —An Act for the Department of Rural Services General Improvement Appropriation :** Appropriates funds for grants to fire departments.

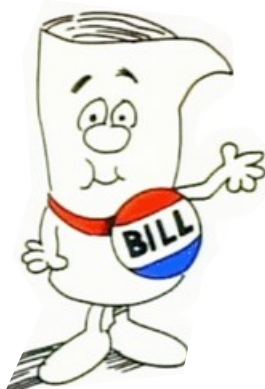
**[SB925](#) —To Exempt Out-of-State Businesses and their Employees from Certain Taxes and Regulatory Requirements During a Disaster Response Period; and to Declare an Emergency:** Out-of-State Businesses working at an Emergency during a Disaster Response Period are exempt from certain state and local taxes and regulations.

**[SB977](#) —To Amend Arkansas Law Concerning Local 911 Systems; Amending Arkansas Law Pertaining to Oversight, Coordination, Reporting, and Training of Local 911 Systems and Dispatchers :** An amendment to the Arkansas Emergency Telephone Services Board that affects membership and responsibilities.

Here are a couple that were signed into law.

**HB1210 was signed into [Act 106](#) —To Allow Municipalities to Contract for Fire Service:** Allows a city to enter into a contract or interlocal agreement for city fire protection with an existing fire department.

**SB354 was signed into [Act 386](#) —Concerning Firefighter Special License Plates; To Remove the Limitation on the Issuance of Firefighter License Plates; and to Redirect the Remittance of the Additional Monthly Fee:** Removes the limit of no more than 2 vehicles and redirects the fee to the Arkansas State Firefighters Association.



# 'Tis the season

## WHAT TO DO

**In a house with a basement:** Avoid windows. Get in the basement and under some kind of sturdy protection or cover yourself with a mattress or sleeping bag. Head protection, such as a helmet, can offer some protection also.

**No basement:** Avoid windows. Go to the lowest floor, small center room (like a bathroom or closet), or in an interior hallway with no windows. Crouch as low as possible to the floor, facing down; and cover your head with your hands. A bath tub may offer a shell of partial protection. Even in an interior room, you should cover yourself with some sort of thick padding. A helmet can offer some protection against head injury.

**In a mobile home:** Get out! Even if your home is tied down, it is not as safe as an underground shelter or permanent, sturdy building. Go to one of those shelters, or to a nearby permanent structure, using your tornado evacuation plan. Most tornadoes can destroy even tied-down mobile homes; and it is best not to play the low odds that yours will make it.

**At school:** Follow the drill! Go to the interior hall or room in an orderly way as you are told. Crouch low, head down, and protect the back of your head with your arms. Stay away from windows and large open rooms like gyms and auditoriums.

**In a vehicle:** Vehicles are extremely risky in a tornado. There is no safe option when caught in a tornado in a car, just slightly less-dangerous ones. If the tornado is visible, far away, and the traffic is light, you may be able to drive out of its path by moving at right angles to the tornado. Seek shelter in a sturdy building, or underground if possible. If you are caught by extreme winds or flying debris, park the car as quickly and safely as possible -- out of the traffic lanes. Stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows; cover your head with your hands and a blanket, coat, or other cushion if possible. If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, leave your car and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands. Avoid seeking shelter under bridges, which can create deadly traffic hazards while offering little protection against flying debris.

— Information from National Weather Service



## Public Affairs

# Lay the groundwork ahead of time

**By Rick Fahr**  
**ADEM PIO**

I've been to the scene of way, way, way too many vehicle wrecks.

I remember the first fatality wreck I covered like it happened yesterday.

It was 1992. About 11 on a Friday night. Just up from my apartment. When I got there, I saw a couple other media folks and walked up to them to ask what had happened. One dead, they said.

"Where?"

"There."

In the weeds on the side of the road.

I took a couple pictures and left. I was working for a weekly newspaper at the time, and I would be able to get the report on Monday.

On other occasions, though, a vehicle crash or a shooting or whatever would happen as deadline approached. I needed information, but the emergency personnel on the scene needed to do their work first.

It didn't take long to figure out a truth about crime and accident scenes: There's no such thing as a good time to ask questions.

Still, if I'd done my job ahead of time, I would have a relationship with somebody, likely someone in a leadership position but maybe not the chief, who could take a minute or two to give me some bare-bones informa-

*"In other words, tend to your relationships before an emergency comes along." - Rick Fahr, ADEM PIO*

tion.

And that's the point: I had to lay the groundwork ahead of time so that when the time came that I needed something, I would be more likely to get it.

That's a lesson we can use in emergency management, too.

I've heard it put this way: Standing in the debris after a tornado isn't the right time to hand out a business card.

In other words, tend to your relationships before an emergency comes along.

That might mean spending time to meet all the first-responder leaders in your community.

Or it might mean touching base with the Emergency Support Func-

tion representatives you could be working with.

Finally, it might mean reaching out to the media in your area so that you can explain how you go about your job and what they should expect if a disaster strikes. Managing expectations is nearly as important as providing information, and it's much easier to do that when there isn't the pressure of an emergency hanging over you.

If you might ever be in a position of dispensing information to the media or the public or a chain of command, you should take the time to determine what the expectation level is so that you can more easily meet it in crunch time.

Then, most importantly, try to meet those expectations. It's not always easy, and each circumstance presents its own challenges, but if the people who are depending on you to provide information know that you are at least making an effort, they will cut you some slack. (Most of the time.)

But to circle back around to the main point, it's much easier to get some understanding and patience if you've tried to build good relationships on the front end. Trying to repair a damaged relationship later on is much more difficult.

It's a headache you don't need, right?

## ADEM Alert user's guide

### Content

Each month's newsletter will contain information about ADEM personnel, programs and activities; news from coordinators around the state; and updates on legislative, policy and other important matters.

### Hyperlinks

Throughout each issue, embedded "hyperlinks" will allow users to click on an image, graphic or [blue text](#) to view additional information on an external website, such as Facebook or [www.ready.arkansas.gov](http://www.ready.arkansas.gov).

These hyperlinks will include links to photo galleries, video interviews, more information about a given subject and/or other types of multimedia content.

Many smartphone operating systems are not set up to properly follow hyperlinks. Therefore, this newsletter is best viewed on a desktop, laptop or tablet device.

### Submissions

To submit information to ADEM public affairs or request public affairs support, call 501-683-6700 or email [publicaffairs@adem.arkansas.gov](mailto:publicaffairs@adem.arkansas.gov).